

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7040

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2430

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EGEN, CZ

SUBJECT: REPORTS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

1. REPORTS ARE CIRCULATING HERE THAT A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE HELD DURING OCTOBER. MOST STORIES SAY THE FOCUS WILL BE ON THE ECONOMY, WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE IN VIEW OF THE FIVE-YEAR-PLAN CYCLE. SOME REPORTS CITE SHORTCOMINGS AND SPEAK OF MINISTERIAL SHUFFLES, BUT OTHERS TREAT THIS MEETING AS MORE ROUTINE CONSIDERATION OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. (FEDERAL ASSEMBLY WILL CONVENE OCTOBER1.)

2. AT RECENT NATO AMBASSADORS MEETING A RUMOR WAS REPORTED THAT CZECHOSLOVAKS WERE CONSIDERING GOING AFTER WESTERN CREDITS, SOMETHING MANY OBSERVERS HERE FEEL HEY MUST DO
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MORE OF IF THEY WANT TO MAKE THE ECONOMIC PLANS WORK. THERE

HAS BEEN NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS. THERE WAS ALSO CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF THE TURNOVER WITHIN HIGH-LEVEL SLOTS AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (SEVERAL DEPUTY MINISTERS HAVE BEEN CHANGED), BUT MOST PEOPLE SEEM TO THINK THIS IS ROUTINE ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE.

3. ONE REPORT FROM A JOURNALIST SAID EXPECTED CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING WOULD ALSO DEAL WITH CZECH-SLOVAK RELATIONS. IF THIS IS TRUE, WE DOUBT THAT MUCH NEWS OF IT WOULD GET OUT. (EMBOFF HAS NOT HEARD ANY FRESH NEWS ON THIS FRONT LATELY, BUT IT IS TRUE THAT IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY DEALINGS WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN PRAGUE AND BRATISLAVA, WE ARE CONSTANTLY AWARE OF THE BURDEN OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE FEDERAL SETUP. NO DOUBT THE CONSTANT TALK ABOUT SVOBODA'S HEALTH, AND WHETHER HUSAK WILL BECOME THE FIRST SLOVAK PRESIDENT, HELPS KEEP THE SUBJECT BEFORE THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. HOWEVER WE ARE NOT TALKING NOW ABOUT HIGH-LEVEL MANEUVERING AT THE PRESIDUM LEVEL, BUT ABOUT POLICY AND PRELIMINARY GUMMING-UP AT THE WORKING LEVEL. FEDERALISM BETWEEN CZECHS AND SLOVAKS CANNOT BE SAID TO BE WORKING WELL YET. FRICTION AND DAILY PROBLEMS ABOUND. OF COURSE HOW EFFECTIVELY A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING COULD COPE WITH THE TANGLE OF PROBLEMS IN THE AREA IS MOOT. IT CALLS FOR CONSTANT ATTENTION, RATHER THAN ANY QUICK-FIX APPROACH. STILL IT IS WORTH KEEPING IN MIND AS A FACT OF LIFE HERE.)

4. ON A RELATED SUBJECT, WE ASK OUR CONTACTS FROM TIME TO TIME ABOUT THE NEXT PARTY CONGRESS. MANY PEOPLE ASSUME THE NEXT CONGRESS WILL BE IN 1976 BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE FIVE YEARS FROM THE LAST CONGRESS, AS CALLED FOR IN THE STATUTES, AND THAT IS THAT. WE HAVE SUSPECTED, HOWEVER, THAT MANY PEOPLE IN THE PARTY WOULD LIKE TO GET BACK IN PHASE WITH THE FIVE-YEAR PLANS (AND TO ERASE SOME OF THE MEMORIES OF 1968 AND ITS EFFECT ON PARTY CONGRESS HISTORY) AND MEET IN 1975, THEN 1980 AND SO ON. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH AN MFA OFFICIAL, EMBOFF ASKED ABOUT THE 15TH CONGRESS AND WAS TOLD THE PARTY WOULD LIKE TO HOLD IT IN 1975, BUT HAD DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE OF OTHER MAJOR EVENTS SCHEDULED IN CONNECTION WITH THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF LIBERATION; THEREFORE IT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE TO HOLD THE CONGRESS UNTIL 1976. COMMENT: WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE TIMING IS ALSO RELATED TO THE LEADERSHIP QUESTION. IF SVOBODA PASSES, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND HUSAK DECIDES SOME CONSOLIDATION OR CONFIRMATION OF HIS LEADERSHIP IS DESIREABLE SOONER, THEN CONCEIVABLY THE CONGRESS COULD BE WHOMPED UP FOR 1975 AFTER ALL.
PERRY

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